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## LUTHER ON THE "A DEBITO AD POSSE" FALLACY IN THE DOCTRINE OF CONVERSION.

(Concluded.)

The first passage of Holy Writ from which Erasmus endeavors to prove spiritual powers in natural man are the following words of Ecclesiasticus: "God from the beginning made man, and left him in the hand of his own counsel. He gave him also His commandments, and His precepts: saying, If thou wilt keep my commandments, and wilt keep continually the faith that pleaseth me, they shall preserve thee. He hath set before thee fire and water; and upon which thou wilt, stretch forth thine hand. Before man is life and death, good and evil; and whichsoever pleaseth him, shall be given unto him." Having carefully examined Erasmus' definition of Free-will ("this empty thing of a Term") and emphasized the fact that the human will is always either good or evil,<sup>1)</sup> Luther proceeds as follows:

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1) Luther writes: "Moreover, it is a mere logical figment" (a mere logical abstraction) "that in man there is a medium, *a mere willing*, nor can they who assert this prove it; it arose from an *ignorance* of things and an *observance of terms*. As though the thing were always in reality, as it is set forth in terms; and there are with the sophists many such misconceptions. Whereas the matter rather stands as Christ saith, 'He that is not with me is against me.' He does not say, He that is not with me is yet not *against me*, but *in the medium*. For if God be in us, Satan is from us, and it is present with us to will nothing but good. But if God be not in us, Satan is in us, and it is present with us to will evil only. Neither God nor Satan admit of a *mere abstracted willing* in us; but, as you your-

"First he saith, 'God made man in the beginning.' Here he speaks of the creation of man; nor does he say anything, as yet, concerning either Free-will or the commandments. Then he goes on, 'and left him in the hand of his own counsel.' And what is here? Is Free-will built upon this? But there is not here any mention of commandments, for the doing of which Free-will is required; nor do we read anything of this kind in the creation of man. If anything be understood by 'the hand of his own counsel,' that should rather be understood which is in Gen. 1 and 3: that man was made lord of all things that he might freely exercise dominion over them: and as Moses saith, 'Let us make man, and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea;' nor can anything else be proved from those words, for it is in these things only that man may act of his own will as being subject unto him. And moreover, he calls this *man's counsel*, in contradiction, as it were, to the *counsel of God*. But after this, when he has said that man was made and left thus in the hand of his own counsel—he adds, 'He added moreover His commandments and His precepts.' Unto what did He add them? Certainly unto that counsel and will of man, and over and above unto that constituting of his dominion over other things. By which commandments He took from man the dominion over one part of His creatures (that is, over the tree of knowledge of good and

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self rightly said, when our liberty is lost we are compelled to serve sin: that is, we *will* sin and evil, we *speak* sin and evil, we *do* sin and evil." (Cole, p. 123.)—Again: "For when it is granted and established, that Free-will, having once lost its liberty, is compulsively bound to the service of sin, and cannot will anything good, I, from these words, can understand nothing else than that Free-will is a mere empty term, whose reality is lost. And a lost liberty, according to my grammar, is no liberty at all. And to give the name of liberty to that which has no liberty is to give it an empty term. If I am wrong here, let him set me right who can. If these observations be obscure or ambiguous, let him who can illustrate and make them plain. I, for my part, cannot call that health which is lost, health; and if I were to ascribe it to one who was sick, I should think I was giving him nothing else than an empty name." (p. 125 f.)

evil), and willed rather that he should *not* be free.—Having added the commandments, He then comes to the will of man towards God and towards the things of God.... When, therefore, Ecclesiasticus says, ‘If thou wilt keep the commandments, and keep the faith that pleaseth me, they shall preserve thee,’ I do not see that Free-will can be proved from those words. For, ‘if thou wilt,’ is a verb of the subjunctive mood, which asserts nothing: as the logicians say, ‘a conditional asserts nothing indicatively:’ such as, if the devil be God, he is deservedly worshiped: if an ass fly, an ass has wings: so also, if there be Free-will, grace is nothing at all. Therefore, if Ecclesiasticus had wished to assert Free-will, he ought to have spoken thus:—man *is able* to keep the commandments of God, or, man *has the power to keep the commandments.”*<sup>1)</sup>

Erasmus asserted that the hypothetical and exhortatory words of Ecclesiasticus were meaningless unless understood as presupposing in man the power to obey and fulfill the condition required. Luther, however, maintains that they purpose to bring man to a knowledge of his spiritual impotence and sin. Luther writes: “But here the Diatribe will sharply retort—‘Ecclesiasticus by saying, “If thou wilt keep,” signifies that there is a will in man, to keep, and not to keep: otherwise, what is the use of saying unto him who has no will, “If thou wilt”? Would it not be ridiculous if any were to say to a blind man, If thou wilt see, thou mayest find a treasure? Or, to a deaf man, If thou wilt hear, I will relate to thee an excellent story? This would be to laugh at their misery.’<sup>2)</sup> I answer: These are the arguments of human reason, which is wont to shoot forth many such sprigs of wisdom. Wherefore, I must dis-

1) Cole, p. 127 ff.

2) Compare Prof. Richard’s assertion in *The Lutheran Quarterly*, p. 65: “To command a person to repent and to believe, on the presupposition that he has no power to repent and to believe, is hypocritical mockery.”

pute now, not with Ecclesiasticus, but with human reason concerning a conclusion; for she, by her conclusions and syllogisms, interprets and twists the Scriptures of God just which way she pleases. But I will enter upon this willingly, and with confidence, knowing that she can prate nothing but follies and absurdities; and that more especially, when she attempts to make a show of her wisdom in these divine matters. First, then, if I should demand of her how it can be proved that the freedom of the will in man is signified and inferred, wherever these expressions are used, 'If thou wilt,' 'If thou shalt do,' 'If thou shalt hear;' she would say, Because the nature of words, and the common use of speech among men, seem to require it. Therefore, she judges of divine things and words according to the customs and things of men; than which, what can be more perverse; seeing that the former things are heavenly, the latter earthly. Like a fool, therefore, she exposes herself, making it manifest that she has not a thought concerning God but what is human. But what if I prove that the nature of words and the use of speech even among men are not always of that tendency as to make a laughing stock of those to whom it is said, 'If thou wilt,' 'If thou shalt do it,' 'If thou shalt hear'? How often do parents thus play with their children, when they bid them come to them, or do this or that, for this purpose only, that it may plainly appear to them how unable they are to do it, and that they may call for the aid of the parent's hand? How often does a faithful physician bid his obstinate patient do or omit those things which are either injurious to him or impossible, to the intent that he may bring him, by an experience, to the knowledge of his disease or his weakness? And what is more general and common, than to use words of insult or provocation, when we would show either enemies or friends what they can do and what they cannot do? I merely go over these things to show Reason her own conclusions, and how absurdly she tacks them to the Scriptures; moreover, how blind she must

be not to see that they do not always stand good even in human words and things. But the case is, if she see it to be done once, she rushes on headlong, taking it for granted that it is done generally in all the things of God and men, thus making, according to the way of her wisdom, of a particularity a universality. If, then, God, as a father, deal with us as with sons, that He might show us who are in ignorance our impotency, or as a faithful physician, that He might make our disease known unto us, or that He might insult His enemies who proudly resist His counsel; and for this end say to us by proposed laws (as being those means by which He accomplishes His design the most effectually), 'Do,' 'hear,' 'keep,' or, 'if thou wilt,' 'if thou wilt do,' 'if thou wilt hear;' can this be drawn herefrom as a just conclusion—therefore, either we have free power to act, or God laughs at us? Why is this not rather drawn as a conclusion—therefore, God tries us, that by His Law He might bring us to a knowledge of our impotency, if we be His friends; or, He thereby righteously and deservedly insults and derides us, if we be His proud enemies. For this, as Paul teaches, is the intent of the divine legislation. Because human nature is blind, so that it knows not its own powers, or rather its own diseases. Moreover, being proud, it self-conceitedly imagines that it knows and can do all things. To remedy which pride and ignorance, God can use no means more effectual than His proposed Law: of which we shall say more in its place: let it suffice to have thus touched upon it here, to refute this conclusion of carnal and absurd wisdom:—'if thou wilt'—therefore thou art able to will freely. The Diatribe dreams that man is whole and sound, as, to human appearance, he is in his own affairs; and therefore, from these words, 'If thou wilt,' 'If thou wilt do,' 'If thou wilt hear,' it pertly argues that man, if his will be not free, is laughed at. Whereas, the Scripture describes man as corrupt and a captive; and, added to that, as proudly contemning and ignorant of his corruption and captivity;

and therefore, by those words, it goads him and rouses him up, that he might know, by a real experience, how unable he is to do any one of those things."<sup>1)</sup>

According to Luther the argument: "If thou wilt—therefore thou hast a free power" proves too much, hence, nothing. Erasmus taught, and purposed to prove, that there are remnants only of spiritual powers in natural man. His argument, however, proves the absolute integrity of all the spiritual powers of man. Erasmus wanted to prove Semi-Pelagianism; he does prove Pelagianism, which he himself condemned. The argument *a debito ad posse* lured Erasmus into the very pit which he had dug for his enemy. Luther writes: "But I will attack the Diatribe itself. If thou really think, O Madam Reason! that these conclusions stand good, 'If thou wilt—therefore thou hast a free power,' why dost thou not follow the same thyself? For thou sayest, according to that 'probable opinion,' that Free-will cannot will anything good. By what conclusion, then, can such a sentiment flow from this passage also, 'If thou wilt keep,' when thou sayest that the conclusion flowing from this is, that man can will and not will freely? What! can bitter and sweet flow from the same fountain? Dost thou not here much more deride man thyself, when thou sayest that he can keep that which he can neither will nor choose? Therefore, neither dost thou, from thy heart, believe that this is a just conclusion, 'If thou wilt—therefore thou hast a free power,' although thou contendest for it with so much zeal, or, if thou dost believe it, then thou dost not, from thy heart, say, that that opinion is 'probable,' which holds that man cannot will good. Thus, reason is so caught in the conclusions and words of her own wisdom, that she knows not what she says, nor concerning what she speaks; nay, knows nothing but that which it is most right she should know—that Free-will is defended

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1) pp. 130—133.

with such arguments as mutually devour, and put an end to each other; just as the Midianites destroyed each other by mutual slaughter, when they fought against Gideon and the people of God, Judges 7. Nay, I will expostulate more fully with this wisdom of the Diatribe. Ecclesiasticus does not say, 'If thou shalt have the desire and the endeavor of keeping' (for this is not to be ascribed to that power of yours, as you have concluded), but he says, 'If thou wilt keep the commandments they shall preserve thee.' Now, then, if we, after the manner of your wisdom, wish to draw conclusions, we should infer thus:—therefore, man is able to keep the commandments. And thus, we shall not here make a certain small degree of desire, or a certain little effort of endeavor to be left in man, but we shall ascribe unto him the whole, full, and abundant power of keeping the commandments. Otherwise, Ecclesiasticus will be made to laugh at the misery of man, as commanding *him* to 'keep,' who, he knows, is not able to 'keep.' Nor would it have been sufficient if he had supposed the desire and the endeavor to be in the man, for he would not then have escaped the suspicion of deriding him, unless he had signified his having the full power of keeping. But, however, let us suppose that that desire and endeavor of Free-will are a real something. What shall we say to those (the Pelagians, I mean) who, from this passage, have denied grace *in toto*, and ascribed all to Free-will? If the conclusion of the Diatribe stand good, the Pelagians have evidently established their point. For the words of Ecclesiasticus speak of *keeping*, not of *desiring* or *endeavoring*. If, therefore, you deny the Pelagians their conclusion concerning *keeping*, they, in reply, will much more rightly deny you your conclusion concerning *endeavoring*. And if you take from them the whole of Free-will, they will take from you your remnant particle of it: for you cannot assert a remnant particle of that which you deny *in toto*. In what degree soever, therefore, you speak against the Pelagians,

who from this passage ascribe the whole to Free-will, in the same degree, and with much more determination, shall we speak against that certain small remnant desire of your Free-will. And in this, the Pelagians themselves will agree with us, that, if their opinion cannot be proved from this passage, much less will any other of the same kind be proved from it: seeing that, if the subject be to be conducted by conclusions, Ecclesiasticus above all makes the most forcibly for the Pelagians; for he speaks in plain words concerning *keeping* only, 'If thou wilt *keep* the commandments;' nay, he speaks also concerning *faith*, 'If thou wilt *keep* the *faith*:' so that, by the same conclusion, keeping the faith ought also to be in our power, which, however, is the peculiar and precious gift of God. In a word, since so many opinions are brought forward in support of Free-will, and there is no one that does not catch at this passage of Ecclesiasticus in defense of itself; and since they are diverse from, and contrary to each other, it is impossible but that they must make Ecclesiasticus contradictory to, and diverse from themselves in the selfsame words; and, therefore, they can from him prove nothing. Although, if that conclusion of yours be admitted, it will make for the Pelagians against all the others; and consequently, it makes against the Diatribe; which, in this passage, is stabbed by its own sword!'"<sup>1)</sup>

"Another passage is adduced by our Diatribe out of Gen. 4, where the Lord saith unto Cain, 'Under thee shall be the desire of sin, and thou shalt rule over it.'—'Here it is shown (saith the Diatribe) that the motions of the mind to evil can be overcome, and that they do not carry with them the necessity of sinning.' These words, 'The motions of the mind to evil can be overcome,' though spoken with ambiguity, yet, from the scope of the sentiment, the consequence, and the circumstances, must mean this:—that

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1) pp. 133—136.

Free-will has the power of overcoming its motions to evil; and that those motions do not bring upon it the necessity of sinning. Here, again, what is there excepted which is not ascribed unto Free-will? What need is there of the Spirit, what need of Christ, what need of God, if Free-will can overcome the motions of the mind to evil? And where, again, is that ‘probable opinion’ which affirms that Free-will cannot so much as will good? For here the victory over evil is ascribed unto that which neither wills nor wishes for good. The inconsiderateness of our Diatribe is really—too—too bad! Take the truth of the matter in a few words. As I have before observed, by such passages as these it is shown to man what he *ought to do*, not what he *can do*. It is said, therefore, unto Cain that he ought to rule over his sin, and to hold its desires in subjection under him. But this he neither did nor could do, because he was already pressed down under the contrary dominion of Satan.—It is well known that the Hebrews frequently use the *future indicative* for the *imperative*: as in Ex. 20, ‘Thou shalt have none other gods but me,’ ‘Thou shalt not kill,’ ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery,’ and in numberless other instances of the same kind. Otherwise, if these sentences were taken indicatively, as they really stand, they would be *promises* of God; and as He cannot lie, it would come to pass that no man could sin; and then, as *commands*, they would be unnecessary; and if this were the case, then our interpreter would have translated this passage more correctly thus:—‘Let its desire be under thee, and rule thou over it,’ Gen. 4. Even as it then ought also to be said concerning the woman, ‘Be thou under thy husband, and let him rule over thee,’ Gen. 3. But that it was not spoken indicatively unto Cain is manifest from this:—it would then have been a *promise*. Whereas, it was not a promise; because, from the conduct of Cain, the event proved the contrary.”<sup>1)</sup>

1) p. 137 f.

"The third passage"—Luther proceeds—"is from Moses, Deut. 30, 'I have set before thy face life and death, choose what is good,' etc.—'What words (says the Diatribe) can be more plain? It leaves to man the liberty of choosing.' I answer: What is more plain than that you are blind? How, I pray, does it leave the liberty of choosing? Is it by the expression 'choose'?—Therefore, as Moses saith, 'Choose,' does it immediately come to pass that they do choose? Then there is no need of the Spirit. And as you so often repeat and inculcate the same things, I shall be justified in repeating the same things also.—If there be a liberty of choosing, why has the 'probable opinion' said that 'Free-will cannot will good'? Can it choose *not willing or against its will*? But let us listen to the similitude" (of Erasmus): "'It would be ridiculous to say to a man standing in a place where two ways meet, Thou seest two roads, go by which thou wilt, when one only was open.' This, as I have before observed, is from the arguments of human reason, which thinks that a man is mocked by a command impossible; whereas I say that the man, by this means, is admonished and roused to see his own impotency. True it is that we are in a place where two ways meet, and that one of them only is open, yea, rather neither of them is open. But by the Law it is shown how impossible the one is, that is, to good, unless God freely give His Spirit; and how wide and easy the other is, if God leave us to ourselves. Therefore, it would not be said ridiculously, but with a necessary seriousness, to the man thus standing in a place where two ways meet, 'Go by which thou wilt,' if he, being in reality impotent, wished to seem to himself strong, or contended that neither way was hedged up. Wherefore, the words of the Law are spoken, not that they might assert the power of the will, but that they might illuminate the blindness of reason, that it might see that its own light is nothing, and that the power of the will is nothing. 'By the Law' (saith Paul) 'is the knowledge of sin,' Rom. 3.

He does not say—is the abolition of, or the escape from sin. The whole nature and design of the Law is to give knowledge only, and that of nothing else save of sin, but not to discover or communicate any power whatever. For knowledge is not power, nor does it communicate power, but it teaches and shows how great the impotency must there be, where there is no power. And what else can the knowledge of sin be but the knowledge of our evil and infirmity? For he does not say—by the Law comes the knowledge of strength or of good. The whole that the Law does, according to the testimony of Paul, is to make known sin. And this is the place where I take occasion to enforce this my general reply:—that man, by the words of the Law, is admonished and taught what *he ought to do*, not what *he can do*: that is, that he is brought to know his sin, but not to believe that he has any strength in himself. Wherefore, friend Erasmus, as often as you throw in my teeth the words of the Law, so often I throw in yours that of Paul, ‘By the Law is the knowledge of sin,’—not of the power of the will. Heap together, therefore, out of the large Concordances all the imperative words into one chaos, provided that they be not words of the promise but of the requirement of the Law only, and I will immediately declare that by them is always shown what men *ought to do*, not what they *can do*, or *do do*. And even common grammarians and every little schoolboy in the street knows that by verbs of the imperative mood nothing else is signified than that which ought to be done, and that, what is done or can be done, is expressed by verbs of the indicative mood. Thus, therefore, it comes to pass that you theologians are so senseless and so many degrees below even schoolboys, that when you have caught hold of one imperative verb you infer an indicative sense, as though what was commanded were immediately and even necessarily done, or possible to be done. But how many *slips* are there *between the cup and the lip!* So that, what you

command to be done, and is therefore quite possible to be done, is yet never done at all. Such a difference is there between verbs imperative and verbs indicative, even in the most common and easy things. Whereas you, in these things which are as far above those as the heavens are above the earth, so quickly make indicatives out of imperatives, that the moment you hear the voice of him commanding, saying, 'Do,' 'keep,' 'choose,' you will have, that it is immediately kept, done, chosen, or fulfilled, or, that our powers are able so to do."<sup>1)</sup>

"In the fourth place, you adduce from Deut. 3 and 30 many passages of the same kind which speak of choosing, of turning away from, of keeping; as, 'If thou shalt keep,' 'if thou shalt turn away from,' 'if thou shalt choose.' — 'All these expressions (you say) are made use of preposterously if there be not a Free-will in man unto good.' I answer: And you, friend Diatribe, preposterously enough also conclude from these expressions the freedom of the will. You set out to prove the *endeavor* and *desire* of Free-will only, and you have adduced no passage which proves such an endeavor. But now you adduce those passages which, if your conclusion hold good, will ascribe *all* to Free-will. Let me here, then, again make a distinction between the words of the Scripture adduced, and the conclusion of the Diatribe tacked to them. The words adduced are imperative, and they say nothing but what *ought to be* done. For Moses does not say, 'Thou hast the power and strength to choose.' The words 'choose,' 'keep,' 'do,' convey the precept 'to keep,' but they do not describe the ability of man. But the conclusion tacked to them by that wisdom-aping Diatribe infers thus: therefore, man can do those things, otherwise the precepts are given in vain. To whom this reply must be made: Madam Diatribe, you make a bad inference, and do not prove your conclusion, but the conclusion and the

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1) pp. 139—141.

proof merely *seem* to be right to your blind and inadvertent self. But know that these precepts are not given preposterously nor in vain, but that proud and blind man might, by them, learn the disease of his own impotency, if he should attempt to do what is commanded. And hence your similitude amounts to nothing where you say, ‘Otherwise it would be precisely the same as if any one should say to a man who was so bound that he could only stretch forth his left arm, Behold! thou hast on thy right hand excellent wine, thou hast on thy left poison; on which thou wilt stretch forth thy hand.’ These your similitudes, I presume, are particular favorites of yours. But you do not all the while see that if the similitudes stand good, they prove much more than you ever purposed to prove, nay, that they prove what you deny and would have to be disproved:—that Free-will can do *all things*. For by the whole scope of your argument, forgetting what you said, ‘that Free-will can do nothing without grace,’ you actually prove that Free-will can do all things without grace. For your conclusions and similitudes go to prove this:—that either Free-will can of itself do those things which are said and commanded, or they are commanded in vain, ridiculously, and preposterously. But these are nothing more than the old songs of the Pelagians sung over again, which even the sophists have exploded, and which you have yourself condemned. And by all this your forgetfulness and disorder of memory you do nothing but evince how little you know of the subject, and how little you are affected by it. And what can be worse in a rhetorician, than to be continually bringing forward things wide of the nature of the subject, and not only so, but to be always declaiming against his subject and against himself?’<sup>1)</sup>

Again and again Luther emphasizes: 1. That in the injunctions of the Law God does not purpose to teach man

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1) pp. 141—143.

what he is *able* to do, but rather what he does not and cannot do; 2. that such injunctions are not superfluous, because natural man, though in reality bound, miserable, captive, sick, and dead, yet imagines himself free, happy, at liberty, powerful, whole, and alive. Luther writes: "Wherefore I observe, finally, the passages of Scripture adduced by you are imperative, and neither prove anything, nor determine anything concerning the ability of man, but enjoin only what things are to be done, and what are not to be done. And as to your conclusions or appendages, and similitudes, if they prove anything they prove this:—that Free-will can do all things without grace. Whereas this you did not undertake to prove, nay, it is by you denied. Wherefore, these your proofs are nothing else but the most direct confutations. For (that I may, if I can, rouse the Diatribe from its lethargy) suppose I argue thus—If Moses say, 'Choose life and keep the commandment,' unless man be able to choose life and keep the commandment, Moses gives that precept to man ridiculously.—Have I by this argument proved my side of the subject, that Free-will can do nothing good, and that it has no external endeavor separate from its own power? Nay, on the contrary, I have proved, by an assertion sufficiently forcible, that either man can choose life and keep the commandment as it is commanded, or Moses is a ridiculous law-giver. But who would dare to assert that Moses was a ridiculous law-giver? It follows, therefore, that man can do the things that are commanded. This is the way in which the Diatribe argues throughout, contrary to its own purposed design; wherein, it promised that it would not argue thus, but would prove a certain endeavor of Free-will; of which, however, so far from proving it, it scarcely makes mention in the whole string of its arguments; nay, it proves the contrary rather; so that it may itself be more properly said to affirm and argue all things ridiculously. And as to its making it, according to its own adduced similitude, to be ridiculous, that

a man, having his right arm bound, should be ordered to stretch forth his right hand when he could only stretch forth his left.—Would it, I pray, be ridiculous, if a man, having both his arms bound, and proudly contending or ignorantly presuming that he could do anything right or left, should be commanded to stretch forth his hand right and left, not that his captivity might be derided, but that he might be convinced of his false presumption of liberty and power, and might be brought to know his ignorance of his captivity and misery? The Diatribe is perpetually setting before us such a man who either *can do* what is commanded, or at least *knows* that he *cannot do* it. Whereas, no such man is to be found. If there were such a one, then, indeed, either impossibilities would be ridiculously commanded, or the Spirit of Christ would be in vain. The Scripture, however, sets forth such a man, who is not only bound, miserable, captive, sick, and dead, but who, by the operation of his lord Satan, to his other miseries, adds that of blindness, so that he believes he is free, happy, at liberty, powerful, whole, and alive. For Satan well knows that if men knew their own misery he could retain no one of them in his kingdom, because it could not be but that God would immediately pity and succor their known misery and calamity, seeing that He is with so much praise set forth, throughout the whole Scripture, as being near unto the contrite in heart, that Isaiah 61 testifies that Christ was sent ‘to preach the Gospel to the poor, and to heal the broken-hearted.’ Wherefore, the work of Satan is, so to hold men that they come not to know their misery, but that they presume that they can do all things which are enjoined. But the work of Moses the legislator is the contrary, even that by the Law he might discover to man his misery, in order that he might prepare him, thus bruised and confounded with the knowledge of himself, for grace, and might send him to Christ to be saved. Wherefore, the office of the Law is not ridiculous, but above all things serious and necessary.

Those, therefore, who thus far understand these things understand clearly, at the same time, that the Diatribe, by the whole string of its arguments, effects nothing whatever; that it collects nothing from the Scriptures but imperative passages, when it understands neither what they mean nor wherefore they are spoken; and that, moreover, by the appendages of its conclusions and carnal similitudes, it mixes up such a mighty mass of flesh that it asserts and proves more than it ever intended, and argues against itself. So that there were no need to pursue particulars any further, for the whole is solved by one solution, seeing that the whole depends on one argument."<sup>1)</sup>

"But however"—Luther proceeds—"that it (the Diatribe) may be drowned in the same profusion in which it attempted to drown me, I will proceed to touch upon a few particulars more. There is that of Is. 1, 'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the fat of the land:'—'Where' (according to the judgment of the Diatribe), 'if there be no liberty of the will, it would have been more consistent had it been said, If I will, if I will not.' The answer to this may be plainly found in what has been said before. Moreover, what consistency would there then have been, had it been said, 'If I will, ye shall eat the fat of the land? Does the Diatribe from its so highly exalted wisdom imagine that the fat of the land can be eaten contrary to the will of God? Or, that it is a rare and new thing that we do not receive of the fat of the land but by the will of God? So also, that of Is. 21, 'If ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come.'—'To what purpose is it' (saith the Diatribe) 'to exhort those who are not in any degree in their own power? It is just like saying to one bound in chains, Move thyself to this place.' Nay, I reply, to what purpose is it to cite passages which of themselves prove nothing, and which, by the appendage of your conclusion, that is, by the perversion of

1) pp. 143—146.

their sense, ascribe all unto Free-will, when a certain endeavor only was to be ascribed unto it, and to be proved? 'The same may be said (you observe) concerning that of Is. 45, "Assemble yourselves and come." "Turn ye unto me and ye shall be saved." And that also of Is. 52, "Awake! awake!" "shake thyself from the dust," "loose the bands of thy neck." And that of Jer. 15, "If thou wilt turn, then will I turn thee; and if thou shalt separate the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth." And Zechariah more evidently still indicates the endeavor of Free-will and the grace that is prepared for him who endeavors, "Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord." Zech. 1.'—In these passages our friend Diatribe makes no distinction whatever between the voice of the Law and the voice of the Gospel: because, forsooth, it is so blind and so ignorant that it knows not what is the Law and what is the Gospel. For out of all the passages from Isaiah it produces no one word of the Law, save this, 'If thou wilt;' all the rest is Gospel, by which, as the word of offered grace, the bruised and afflicted are called unto consolation. Whereas, the Diatribe makes them the words of the Law. But, I pray thee, tell me, what can that man do in theological matters, and the sacred writings, who has not even gone so far as to know what is Law and what is Gospel, or, who, if he does know, condemns the observance of the distinction between them? Such a one must confound all things, heaven with hell, and life with death; and will never labor to know anything of Christ. Concerning which, I shall put my friend Diatribe a little in remembrance, in what follows. Look, then, first, at that of Jeremiah and Zechariah, 'If thou wilt turn, then will I turn thee;' and, 'Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you.' Does it then follow from 'Turn ye'—therefore, ye are able to turn? Does it follow also from 'Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart'—therefore, thou art able to love with all thine heart? If these arguments stand good, what do

they conclude but that Free-will needs not the grace of God, but can do all things of its own power? And then, how much more right would it be that the words should be received as they stand—'If thou shalt turn, then will I also turn thee'? That is,—if thou shalt cease from sinning, I also will cease from punishing; and if thou shalt be converted and live well, I also will do well unto thee in turning away thy captivity and thy evils. But even in this way it does not follow that man can turn by his own power, nor do the words imply this; but they simply say, 'If thou wilt turn,' by which a man is admonished of what he ought to do. And when he has thus known and seen what he *ought to do* but *cannot do*, he would ask *how he is to do it*, were it not for that Leviathan of the Diatribe (that is, that appendage and conclusion it has here tacked on) which comes in and between and says,—'therefore, if man cannot turn of his own power, "turn ye" is spoken in vain.' But of what nature all such conclusion is, and what it amounts to, has been already fully shown. It must, however, be a certain stupor or lethargy which can hold that the power of Free-will is confirmed by these words, 'Turn ye,' 'If thou wilt turn,' and the like, and does not see that, for the same reason, it must be confirmed by this Scripture also, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart,' seeing that the meaning of Him who commands and requires is the same in both instances. For the loving of God is not less required than our conversion and the keeping of all the commandments, because the loving of God is our real conversion. And yet, no one attempts to prove Free-will from that command 'to love,' although from those words 'If thou wilt,' 'If thou wilt hear,' 'Turn ye,' and the like, all attempt to prove it. If therefore from that word, 'Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,' it does not follow that Free-will is anything or can do anything, it is certain that it neither follows from these words, 'If thou wilt,' 'If thou wilt hear,' 'Turn ye', and the like, which

either require less, or require with less force of importance, than these words, ‘Love God!’ ‘Love the Lord!’ Whatever, therefore, is said against drawing a conclusion in support of Free-will from this word, ‘Love God,’ the same must be said against drawing a conclusion in support of Free-will from every other word of command or requirement. For if by the command ‘to love’ the nature of the Law only be shown, and what we *ought to do*, but not the power of the will or what we *can do*, but rather, what we *cannot do*, the same is shown by all the other Scriptures of requirement. For it is well known that even the schoolmen, except the Scotinians and moderns, assert, that man cannot love God with all his heart. Therefore, neither can he perform any one of the other precepts, for all the rest, according to the testimony of Christ, hang on this one. Hence, by the testimony even of the doctors of the schools, this remains as a settled conclusion:—that the words of the Law do not prove the *power of Free-will*, but show what we *ought to do*, and what we *cannot do*.<sup>1)</sup>

Luther carefully distinguishes between exhortations of the Law and of the Gospel, the former of which being exacting in their nature, while the latter are “the voice of divine consolation and promise, by which nothing is demanded of us, but in which the grace of God is offered unto us.” Luther writes: “But our friend Diatribe, proceeding to still greater lengths of inconsiderateness, not only infers from that passage of Zechariah, ‘Turn ye unto me,’ an indicative sense, but also goes on with zeal to prove therefrom the endeavor of Free-will and the grace prepared for the person endeavoring. Here, at last, it makes mention of the endeavor, and by a new kind of grammar, ‘to turn,’ signifies, with it, the same thing as ‘to endeavor:’ so that the sense is, ‘Turn ye unto me’, that is, Endeavor ye to turn; ‘and I will turn unto you,’ that is, I will endeavor to turn unto you: so that, at last, it attributes an endeavor even unto God, and, per-

1) pp. 146—150.

haps, would have grace to be prepared for Him upon His endeavoring; for if turning signify endeavoring in one place, why not in every place? Again, it says, that from Jer. 15, 'If thou shalt separate the precious from the vile,' not the endeavor only, but the liberty of choosing is proved; which, before, it declared was 'lost,' and changed into a 'necessity of serving sin.' You see, therefore, that in handling the Scriptures, the Diatribe has a Free-will with a witness, so that, with it, words of the same kind are compelled to prove *endeavor* in one place, and *liberty* in another, just as the turn suits. But, to away with vanities, the word TURN is used in the Scriptures in a twofold sense, the one *legal*, the other *evangelical*. In the legal sense, it is the voice of the exactor and commander, which requires, not an endeavor, but a change in the whole life. In this sense Jeremiah frequently uses it, saying, 'Turn ye now every one of you from his evil way;' and, 'Turn ye unto the Lord:' in which he involves the requirement of all the commandments, as is sufficiently evident. In the evangelical sense, it is the voice of the divine consolation and promise, by which nothing is demanded of us, but in which the grace of God is offered unto us. Of this kind is that of Ps. 126, 'When the Lord shall turn again the captivity of Zion;' and that of Ps. 116, 'Turn again into thy rest, O my soul.' Hence, Zechariah, in a very brief compendium, has set forth the preaching both of the Law and of grace. It is the whole sum of the Law, where he saith, 'Turn ye unto me;' and it is grace, where he saith, 'I will turn unto you.' Wherefore, as much as Free-will is proved from this word, 'Love the Lord,' or from any other word of particular Law, just so much is it proved from this word of summary Law, 'TURN YE.' It becomes a wise reader of the Scriptures, therefore, to observe what are words of the Law and what are words of grace, that he might not be involved in confusion like the unclean sophists, and like this sleepily-yawning Diatribe."<sup>1)</sup> "It is

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1) pp. 150—152.

the Gospel voice, and the sweetest consolation to miserable sinners, where Ezekiel saith, ‘I desire not the death of a sinner, but rather, that he should be converted and live,’ and it is in all respects like unto that of Ps. 30, ‘For His wrath is but for a moment, in His willingness is life.’ And that of Ps. 36, ‘How sweet is Thy loving-kindness, O God.’ Also, ‘For I am merciful.’ And that of Christ, Matt. 11, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ And also that of Ex. 20, ‘I will show mercy unto thousands of them that love me.’ And what is more than half of the holy Scripture but mere promises of grace, by which mercy, life, peace, and salvation are extended from God unto men? And what else is the whole word of promise but this, ‘I desire not the death of a sinner’? Is not His saying, ‘I am merciful,’ the same as saying, I am not angry, I am unwilling to punish, I desire not your death, my will is to pardon, my will is to spare? And if there were not these divine promises standing, by which consciences, afflicted with a sense of sin and terrified at the fear of death and judgment, might be raised up, what place would there be for pardon or for hope! What sinner would not sink in despair! But as Free-will is not proved from any of the other words of mercy, of promise, and of comfort, so neither is it from this, ‘I desire not the death of a sinner.’<sup>1)</sup> “Nothing, therefore, could be more absurdly adduced in support of Free-will than this passage of Ezekiel, nay, it makes with all possible force directly against Free-will. For it is here shown in what state Free-will is, and what it can do under the knowledge of sin, and in turning itself from it, that is, that it can only go on to worse, and add to its sins desperation and impenitency, unless God soon come in to help, and to call back, and raise up by the word of promise. For the concern of God in promising grace to recall and raise up the sinner is itself an argument sufficiently great and conclusive that Free-will, of itself, can-

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1) p. 153 f.

not but go on to worse, and (as the Scripture saith) 'fall down to hell:' unless, indeed, you imagine that God is such a trifler that He pours forth so great an abundance of the words of promise, not from any necessity of them unto our salvation, but from a mere delight in loquacity! Wherefore, you see that not only all the words of Law stand against Free-will, but also, that all the words of the promise utterly confute it; that is, that the whole Scripture makes directly against it."<sup>1)</sup>

Having in the following paragraphs made the important "distinction between God Preached and God Hidden; that is, between the word of God and God Himself," Luther concludes his remarks on the passages quoted by Erasmus from the Old Testament as follows: "The Diatribe next argues—'If what is commanded be not in the power of every one, all the numberless exhortations in the Scriptures, and also all the promises, threatenings, expostulations, reproofs, asseverations, benedictions, and maledictions, together with all the forms of precepts, must of necessity stand coldly useless.' The Diatribe is perpetually forgetting the subject point, and going on with that which is contrary to its professed design; and it does not see that all these things make with greater force against itself than against us. For from all these passages it proves the liberty and ability to fulfill all things, as the very words of the conclusion which it draws necessarily declare: whereas its design was to prove '*that Free-will is that which cannot will anything good without grace, and is a certain endeavor that is not to be ascribed to its own powers.*' But I do not see that such an endeavor is proved by any of these passages, but that, as I have repeatedly said already, that only is required which ought to be done; unless it be needful to repeat it again, as often as the Diatribe harps upon the same string, putting off its readers with a useless profusion of words. About

1) p. 155 f.

the last passage which it brings forward out of the Old Testament is that of Deut. 30, 'This commandment which I command thee this day is not above thee, neither is it far off. Neither is it in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who of us shall ascend up into heaven and bring it down unto us, that we may hear it and do it. But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.' The Diatribe contends—'that it is declared by this passage, that what is commanded is not only placed in us, but is down-hill work, that is, easy to be done, or at least, not difficult.'—I thank the Diatribe for such wonderful erudition! For if Moses so plainly declare, that there is in us, not only an ability, but also a power to keep all the commandments with ease, why have I been toiling all this time? Why did I not at once produce this passage and assert Free-will before the whole world? What need now of Christ? What need of the Spirit? We have now found a passage which stops the mouths of all, and which not only plainly asserts the liberty of the will, but teaches that the observance of all the commandments is easy!—What need was there for Christ to purchase for us, even with His own blood, the Spirit, as though necessary, in order that He might make the keeping of the commandments easy unto us, when we were already thus qualified by nature! Nay, here the Diatribe itself recants its own assertions, where it affirmed that 'Free-will cannot will anything good without grace,' and now affirms that Free-will is of such power, that it cannot only will good, but keep the greatest, nay, all the commandments with ease.'<sup>1)</sup> "What therefore does Moses mean by these most plain and clear words, but that he has worthily performed his office as a faithful law-giver; and that, therefore, if all men have not before their eyes and do not know all the precepts which are enjoined, the fault does not rest with him; that they

1) pp. 159—161.

have no place left them for excuse, so as to say, they did not know, or had not the precepts, or were obliged to seek them elsewhere; that if they do not keep them, the fault rests not with the Law, or with the law-giver, but with themselves, seeing that the Law is before them, and the law-giver has taught them; and that they have no place left for excusation of ignorance, only for accusation of negligence and disobedience? It is not, saith he, necessary to fetch the laws down from heaven, nor from lands beyond the sea, nor from afar, nor can you frame as an excuse, that you never had them nor heard them, for you have them nigh unto you; they are they which God hath commanded, which you have heard from my mouth, and which you have had in your hearts and in your mouths continually; you have heard them treated on by the Levites in the midst of you, of which this my word and book are witnesses; this, therefore, only remains—that you do them.—What, I pray you, is here attributed unto Free-will? What is there, but the demanding that it would do the laws which it has, and the taking away from it the excuse of ignorance and the want of the laws? These passages are the sum of what the Diatribe brings forward out of the Old Testament in support of Free-will, which being answered, there remains nothing that is not answered at the same time, whether it have brought forward, or wished to bring forward more; seeing that it could bring forward nothing but imperative, or conditional, or optative passages, by which is signified, not what we *can do*, or *do do* (as I have so often replied to the so often repeating Diatribe), but what we *ought to do*, and what *is required of us*, in order that we might come to the knowledge of our impotency, and that there might be wrought in us the knowledge of our sin. Or, if they do prove anything, by means of the appended conclusions and similitudes invented by human reason, they prove this:—that Free-will is not a certain small degree of endeavor or desire only, but a full and free ability and power to do all

things, without the grace of God, and without the Holy Spirit.''<sup>1)</sup>

From Luther's remarks on the New Testament passages by which Erasmus endeavored to support his Semi-Pelagian theory we quote the following: "We now come to the New Testament, where again are marshaled up in defense of that miserable bondage of Free-will a host of imperative sentences, together with all the auxiliaries of carnal reason, such as, conclusions, similitudes, etc., called in from all quarters. And if you ever saw represented in a picture, or imagined in a dream, a king of flies attended by his forces armed with lances and shields of straw or hay, drawn up in battle array against a real and complete army of veteran warriors—it is just thus that the human dreams of the Diatribe are drawn up in battle array against the hosts of the words of God!"<sup>2)</sup> "Another passage is that of Matt. 19, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.'—'With what face' (says the Diatribe) 'can "if thou wilt" be said to him who has not a Free-will?'—To which I reply, Is, therefore, the will, according to this word of Christ, free? But you wish to prove, that Free-will cannot will anything good; and that, without grace, it of necessity serves sin. With what face, then, do you now make will wholly free? The same reply will be made to that also—"If thou wilt be perfect," "If any one will come after me," "He that will save his life," "If ye love me," "If ye shall continue." In a word, as I said before (to ease the Diatribe's labor in adducing such a load of words), let all the *conditional ifs* and all the *imperative verbs* be collected together.—"All these precepts" (says the Diatribe) stand coldly useless, if nothing be attributed to the human will. How ill does that conjunctive *if* accord with mere necessity!—I answer: If they stand coldly useless, it is your fault that they stand coldly useless, who, at one time, assert that nothing is to

1) p. 163 f.

2) p. 165.

be attributed to Free-will, while you make Free-will unable to will good, and who, on the contrary, here make the same Free-will able to will all good; nay, you thus make them to stand as nothing at all; unless, with you, the same words stand coldly useless and warmly useful at the same time, while they at once assert all things and deny all things. I wonder how any author can delight in repeating the same things so continually, and to be as continually forgetting his subject design; unless, perhaps, distrusting his cause, he wishes to overcome his adversary by the bulk of his book, or to weary him out with the tedium and toil of reading it. By what conclusion, I ask, does it follow, that *will* and *power* must immediately take place as often as it is said, 'If thou wilt,' 'If any one will,' 'If thou shalt'? Do we not most frequently imply in such expressions impotency rather, and impossibility? For instance—If thou wilt equal Virgil in singing, my friend Mevius, thou must sing in another strain.—If thou wilt surpass Cicero, friend Scotus, instead of thy subtle jargon, thou must have the most exalted eloquence.—If thou wilt stand in competition with David, thou must of necessity produce psalms like his. Here are plainly signified things impossible to our own powers, although, by divine power, all these things may be done. So it is in the Scriptures, that by such expressions it might be shown what we cannot do ourselves, but what can be done in us by the power of God.<sup>1)</sup> "It would be too tedious to repeat here each imperative passage which the Diatribe enumerates out of the New Testament, always tacking to them her own conclusions, and vainly arguing that those things which are so said are 'to no purpose,' are 'superfluous,' are 'coldly useless,' are 'ridiculous,' are 'nothing at all,' if the will be not free. And I have already repeatedly observed, even to disgust, that nothing whatever is effected by such arguments; and that if anything be proved, the whole of Free-will is proved."<sup>2)</sup>

1) p. 169 f.

2) p. 180.

The above quotations, which could be multiplied indefinitely, go to show that Luther condemns both the argument *a praecepto ad posse* and the underlying principle of establishing Christian doctrines by human inferences. According to Luther an article of faith requires a clear word of God, neither more nor less. And an inference which cannot be substantiated by the very words of Holy Writ is not a component part of his theology. Luther utterly despises and ridicules the Reformed and Catholic theologians who, like Erasmus, Zwingli, and others, based their teaching on what they called "logical inferences" and "necessary conclusions." He makes it a point to prove that they abuse both God's Word and their own reason. Indeed, in theology rationalism is to Luther in every instance irrationalism, as well as irreverence and rebellion against God and His Word. In 1528 Luther wrote in a letter against the Bishop of Meissen on the Concomitance theory of the Papists:<sup>1)</sup> "What, then, do the priests do? Undoubtedly in every mass they eat twice and drink twice; for in the bread they eat the body and drink His blood, since a body cannot exist without blood. Again, in the cup they drink the blood and eat the body; for blood cannot exist without a body. Indeed, a great improvement of the Christian Church and making two masses out of one! Now I revoke that I have said the bishops were ignorant; for this bishop surely puts me to silence, and teaches me that there are nothing but double masses in the church, and that in every mass Christ is sacrificed, eaten, and drunk twice. Prosperity is awaiting the sacrificial priests (*Opferpaffen*); now they well may sell one mass for two groschen, since it is but fair for one to pay double money for double goods. Thus, then, throughout all Christendom the service of God is rendered twice as great, and the priests will grow also temporally twice as rich, as before; O the blessed times, it will be a golden year.—With this agrees *Concomitance*,

1) Erl. edition, 30, p. 418 f.

that is, *Consequence*. Since the body of Christ is not without blood, it follows that His blood is not without the soul; from this it follows that His soul is not without the divinity; from this it follows that His divinity is not without the Father and the Holy Ghost; from this it follows that in the sacrament, even when celebrated under one species, the soul of Christ and the Holy Trinity are eaten and drunk together with His body and blood; from this it follows that in every single mass the mass-priest (*Messpfaff*) sacrifices and sells the Holy Trinity twice; from this it follows, since divinity is not without the creature, that also heaven and earth must be in the sacrament; from this it follows that the devils and hell are also in the sacrament; from this it follows that whoever eats the sacrament, also one species, devours (*frisset*) the bishop of Meissen together with his mandate and bill; from this it follows that in every mass a Meissen priest devours and drinks (*säuft*) his bishop twice; from this it follows that the bishop of Meissen must have a belly greater than heaven and earth; and who will ever enumerate all the consequences? Finally, however, it also follows from this that all those who infer such conclusions (*alle solche Folger*) are asses, clowns, blind, mad, insane, furious, foolish, and raving: *this consequence is certain.*"

F. B.

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WILLIAM TYNDALE,  
THE TRANSLATOR OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE.

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**Tyndale's Life in England.**

William Tyndale, the translator of the English Bible, was born about 1485, a few years after Martin Luther, the great translator of the German Bible. Most likely his birth-place was Slymbridge in Gloucestershire, near Wales. It seems that his early education was not neglected, for he writes, "Except my memory fail me, and that I have for-

gotten what I read when I was a child, thou shalt find in the English chronicle, how that king Athelstane caused the Holy Scripture to be translated into the tongue that then was in England."

About 1504 Tyndale went to Magdalen Hall, Oxford, and took his degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1508, and that of Master of Arts in 1511. At the University he was influenced by John Colet's lecture on Paul's letter to the Romans. Colet had heard Savonarola at Florence. He translated the Lord's Prayer into English and published it with some explanations for the benefit of the common people. For this good work he was almost burned as a heretic by Fitz James, Bishop of London; only the friendship of the Archbishop and the king saved him.

While at Oxford, Tyndale read the New Testament in Greek and explained it to the students of Magdalen College. Magdalen Hall was also known as "Grammar Hall" because it fostered the study of the ancient languages. Grocyn had learned Greek in Italy and was the first to teach it in Oxford in 1492. But the party of the "Trojans" opposed the study of Greek. One of the colleges had forbidden the entrance of the Greek New Testament within its walls "by horse or by boat, by wheels or on foot." Possibly owing to this enmity Tyndale left Oxford for Cambridge where Erasmus was teaching Greek and getting out his edition of the Greek New Testament, in the introduction to which he wants the Bible to be read by all, adding as a climax, "and be read and understood by Scots and Irishmen." About the close of 1521 we find Tyndale as tutor in the family of Sir John Walsh, at Little Sudbury, in Gloucestershire, twelve miles northeast of Bristol.

"The continuous stream of Lutheran literature" began to pour into English seaports in 1521. Lutheran books, though rigorously prohibited, were probably not unknown amongst the imports that floated up the Avon to the warehouses of the Bristol merchants. Amongst the neighboring

gentry were several men of high character and considerable learning; and religion was the all-engrossing theme of the time, so that Tyndale found himself surrounded at Sir John Walsh's table by the same atmosphere of theological controversy in which he had moved at the University. "There was talk of learning, as well of Luther and Erasmus Roterodamus, as of opinions in the Scripture. The said Master Tyndale being learned, and which had been a student of divinity in Cambridge, and had therein taken degree of school, did many times therein shew his mind and learning." Sir John kept a good table, and the clergy were often invited. Tyndale had an uncomfortable way of crushing his opponents by clinching his arguments with chapter and verse of the Bible. As a result they began to hate him and staid away from the good dinners of Master Walsh rather than have the "sour sauce" of Tyndale's arguments. The clergy were very ignorant. So late as 1530 Tyndale asserted that there were twenty thousand priests in England who could not translate into English the third petition of the Lord's Prayer. A generation later, in the reign of Edward VI, Bishop Hooper of Gloucester examined 311 clergy; of these 168 were unable to repeat the Ten Commandments, 31 could not tell where they came from, 40 were unable to repeat the Lord's Prayer, about 40 were unable to say who the author was.

The Convocation of Canterbury had expressly forbidden any man to translate any part of the Scripture into English, or to read such translation without authority of the Bishop, an authority not likely to be granted. The study of the Bible was not even a part of the preparatory study of the religious teachers of the people. Writing against Alexander Alesius to James V of Scotland, Cochlaeus, the notorious Romish theologian, writes about the Bible as follows: "The New Testament translated into the language of the people, is in truth the food of death, the fuel of sin, the veil of malice, the pretext of false liberty, the protection of dis-

obedience, the corruption of discipline, the depravity of morals, the termination of concord, the death of honesty, the well-spring of vices, the disease of virtues, the instigation of rebellion, the milk of pride, the nourishment of contempt, the death of peace, the destruction of charity, the enemy of unity, the murderer of truth!"

In 1529 Latimer, in St. Edward's Church at Cambridge, in his two famous "Sermons on the Card," advocated the translation and universal reading of the Bible. Prior Buckenham soon replied against the reading of the Bible in a sermon on "Christmas Dice" in the following style: "Where Scripture saith, 'No man that layeth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is meet for the kingdom of God,' will not the ploughman, when he readeth these words, be apt forthwith to cease from his plough, and then where will be the sowing and harvest? Likewise, also, whereas the baker readeth, 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,' will he not forthwith be too sparing in the use of leaven, to the great injury of our health? And so, also, when the simple man reads the words, 'If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee,' incontinent he will pluck out his eyes, and so the whole realm will be full of blind men, to the great decay of the nation, and the manifest loss of the king's grace. And thus, by reading of Holy Scriptures, will the whole kingdom be in confusion." (*Demans, Life of Latimer*, p. 77.)

The greed of the clergy at that time is described by Tyndale as follows: "The parson sheareth, the vicar shaveth, the parish priest polleth, the friar scrapeth, and the pardoner pareth: we lack but the butcher to pull off the skin." "Some years before the rise of the Lutheran heresy there was almost an entire abandonment of equity in the ecclesiastical judgments; in morals no discipline, in sacred literature no erudition, in divine things no reverence; religion was almost extinct." These are the words of Cardinal Bellarmine. As late as May 24, 1530, Warham, Tunstall, Gar-

diner, Sir Thomas More, and "with the king's highness being present," decided "it is not necessary for the said Scripture to be in the English tongue, and in the hands of the common people."

In these circumstances it need not surprise us that Tyndale was soon suspected of heresy when he always proved his points with the Bible. The outspoken young scholar caused many an uneasy hour to Lady Walsh, who would remind him that bishops, abbots, and others, having an income of hundreds of pounds yearly, held views the very opposite of his; and "were it reason, think you, that we should believe you before them?" Of course it was difficult for a moneyless young scholar to answer such an argument coming from such a source. In order to strengthen his position with his wavering hostess by the testimony of Erasmus, whose fame was resounding through Europe, Tyndale translated his *Handbook of a Christian Soldier*, written 1501, and Sir John Walsh and his lady were won over to his opinions, and the clergy were no more invited.

Tyndale often preached in the nearby little church of St. Adeline and even on St. Austin's Green of the great city of Bristol. His conduct and his preaching were fiercely criticised by the clergy. "These blind and rude priests, flocking together to the ale-house, for that was their preaching-place, raged and railed against him; affirming that his sayings were heresy, adding moreover unto his sayings, of their own heads, more than ever he spake," says Fox. Tyndale was secretly accused to Chancellor Parker, and preparations to condemn him were quietly made. Summoned to appear before the Chancellor, Tyndale went, though fearing that evil was intended, and "prayed in his mind heartily to God to strengthen him to stand fast in the truth of His Word." "When I came before the Chancellor, he threatened me grievously, and reviled me, and rated me as though I had been a dog."

But his defense seems to have been ably conducted, for he left the court neither branded as a heretic, nor even forced to swear off anything; "folk were glad to take all to the best," as Sir Thomas More wrote. Tyndale thought long and hard why the clergy should oppose so violently the opinions taken from the Bible, and in his doubts consulted "a certain doctor that had been an old chancellor before to a bishop," probably William Latimer, the Oxford scholar. His doubts were resolved in a most unexpected manner. "Do you not know," said the doctor, "that the Pope is the very antichrist which the Scripture speaketh of? But beware what you say; for if you shall be perceived to be of that opinion, it will cost you your life. I have been an officer of his, but I have given it up and defy him and all his works." Convinced of this, Tyndale was also convinced that to save the church, the common people must have the Bible in their own tongue. He was no dreamer or fanatic; with a clear eye he saw the seat of trouble, and with a glowing heart and firm will he set about to seek the only remedy. "I perceived how that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth, except the Scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue, that they might see the process, order, and meaning of the text." "In this they be all agreed, to drive you from the knowledge of the Scripture, and that ye shall not have the text thereof in the mother tongue, and to keep the world still in darkness, to the intent they might sit in the consciences of the people, through vain superstition and false doctrine, to satisfy their filthy lusts, their proud ambition, and unsatiable covetousness, and to exalt their own honor above king and emperor, yea, above God Himself . . . which thing only moved me to translate the New Testament."

"Communing and disputing," says Fox, "with a certain learned man in whose company he happened to be, he drove him to that issue, that the learned man said, 'We were better to be without God's laws than the Pope's.'

Master Tyndale hearing that, answered him, ‘I defy the Pope and all his laws;’ and added, ‘If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plow shall know more of the Scripture than thou doest.’” This became known; the priests waxed fiercer in their opposition; they charged him with heresy; they hinted at burning him.

With an introduction to Sir John’s friend, Sir Harry Guildford, Controller of the Royal Household, Tyndale in the summer of 1523 went to London to see the new bishop, Cuthbert Tunstall, whom Erasmus had praised for his love of learning. As proof of his scholarship, Tyndale took with him “an oration of Isocrates which I had translated out of greke in to English.” When Tyndale came to London, the Reformation in Germany was no longer a mere local dispute, but a great movement, the pulses of which were felt in every part of Western Europe. The works of Luther were widely read with admiration and sympathy. Two years before Tyndale’s arrival in London, it was discovered that Luther’s books had been imported in such numbers that Wolsey required all to deliver up the works of the arch-heretic to the church authorities; nevertheless the books were brought in by the merchants who traded with the Low Countries. Henry himself, who loved theological controversy, and who prided himself on his orthodoxy, had written against Luther, and had been rewarded for his zeal by the title of “Defender of the Faith,” still fondly cherished as the most honorable of all the distinctions of the English sovereigns. The example of the king was, of course, followed by the clergy; the pulpits resounded with fierce denunciations of the “detestable and damnable heresies” of that “child of the devil,” who had ventured to resist the authority of the Pope. The attention of Parliament was directed to the reported spread of Lutheranism in the University of Cambridge, and it was proposed to search the suspected colleges, which, however, Wolsey forbade. Until

he could see Tunstall, Tyndale preached in St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, corner of the Strand and Fleet Street, and greatly impressed Humphrey Monmouth, a wealthy, educated, and traveled cloth merchant, later an Alderman and a Sheriff, who lived near the Tower. Tyndale excited the sympathy of the generous merchant, who himself had begun "to be a Scripture-man," and whose special pleasure it was to assist needy scholars. Tunstall accorded an interview to Tyndale, acknowledged the scholarship of the stranger, but said his house was full, and advised the young man to seek a place elsewhere.

"The priest came to me again," writes Monmouth, "and besought me to help him; and so I took him into my house half-a-year; and there he lived like a good priest as methought. He studied most part of the day and of the night at his book; and he would eat but sodden meat by his good will, and drink but small single beer. I never saw him wear linen about him in the space he was with me. I did promise him ten pounds sterling, to pray for my father and mother their souls, and all Christian souls." For this kindness to Tyndale, Monmouth was imprisoned in the Tower. Sir Thomas More, while fiercely fighting Tyndale's doctrines, admits that "before he went over the sea he was well known for a man of right good living, studious and well learned in the Scripture, and looked and preached holily."

Monmouth bought and studied the works of Luther and was much influenced by the Reformer, in fact, had all the usual marks of the "detestable sect of Lutherans." Hitherto Tyndale "seems to have looked up to Erasmus as the great light and guide of the age, and the true reformer of religion; now he heard of a greater Reformer, whose words of more impressive eloquence, and, still more, whose conduct of more resolute determination, had achieved what Erasmus had rather recommended than attempted.... There can be no question that from this time onwards Luther occupied

the highest place in his esteem, and exercised very considerable influence over his opinions," says Demans.

Tyndale saw men around him led to prison and to death for having or reading Luther's writings, and he knew well that a Bible translation would be a still more dangerous book. At last the simple-minded, unworldly scholar "understood not only that there was no room in my lord of London's palace to translate the New Testament, but, also, that there was no place to do it in all England." But Tyndale was not the man to put his hand to the plow and then draw back. If only a life of exile could do the work, a life of exile he would accept. "To give the people the bare text of Scriptures, he would offer his body to suffer what pain or torture, yea, what death His Grace (Henry VIII) would, so that this be obtained."

About May, 1524, he sailed to Hamburg, unto "poverty, mine exile out of mine natural country, and bitter absence from my friends, the hunger, the thirst, the cold, the great danger wherewith I was everywhere compassed, the innumerable other hard and sharp fightings which I had to endure." He never saw England again.

#### Tyndale's Work in Germany.

In Hamburg the influence of that mighty movement begun by Luther had already made itself felt; in spite of the fierce opposition of the priests, the followers of Luther were free to preach the pure doctrine. But Tyndale did not remain in Hamburg; he went to Wittenberg, "the common asylum of all apostates," as Duke George of Saxony styled it; "the little town which had suddenly become the sacred city of the Reformation," as Green puts it. Green is not far wrong, for Scultetus says of certain travelers, "as they came in sight of the town, they returned thanks to God with clasped hands, for from Wittenberg, as heretofore from Jerusalem, the light of evangelical truth had spread to the uttermost parts of the earth."

At Wittenberg Tyndale "had conference with Luther and other learned men in those parts," Fox says. Free from danger, Tyndale at Wittenberg settled down to his life's work of translating the New Testament into English. He used the 1522, third edition of Erasmus' Greek New Testament. He learned the German language and "systematically consulted" Luther's German New Testament. Froude says Tyndale translated under Luther's "immediate direction," and Green speaks of "Tyndale's Lutheran translation." Tyndale's New Testament is often called "Luther's New Testament in English." Why? 1. Compare Luther's folio German Testament of September, 1522, with Tyndale's English Testament of September, 1525, and it is clear at a glance that Tyndale's is Luther's in miniature: the appearance of the page, the arrangement of the text, the inner margin for the references and the outer one for the explanations, the "pestilent glosses"—all are the same. 2. The "pestilent glosses," as Henry VIII called them, or marginal notes of Tyndale's, are literally taken from Luther or reproduced from Luther; some are original with Tyndale. 3. The translation is from the original Greek, but Luther's was used systematically. 4. In Tyndale's prologue many passages have been borrowed from Luther, "as the reader speedily begins to suspect from the characteristic ring of the sentences." Two pages are taken almost word for word from Luther. A comparison of the two "fully justifies the assertion of Tyndale's contemporaries that he reproduced in English Luther's German Testament," as the *Athenaeum* says.

In the spring of 1525 Tyndale returned to Hamburg to get from Hans Collenbeck the ten pounds he had left with Monmouth, and then went to Cologne to print his New Testament. That city boasted of some famous printers who had extensive business connections with England. Three thousand copies were to be printed by Quentel. The work, a quarto with prologue and marginal notes and references,

had well proceeded when suddenly the senate of the city ordered the printers to stop at once. In order to escape prison or death, Tyndale snatched what he could of the printed sheets and sailed up the Rhine to Worms.

John Cochlaeus, whom the Papists call "the scourge of Luther," was an exile in Cologne and heard the printers boast that all England, in a short time, would become Lutheran. "Inviting, therefore, some printers to his lodgings, after they were excited with wine, one of them in private conversation disclosed to him the secret by which England was to be drawn over to the party of Luther, *viz.*, that there were at that very time in the press 3000 copies of the Lutheran New Testament, translated into the English language, and that they had advanced as far as the letter K in the order of the sheets," writes Cochlaeus. Hermann Rinek, a senator of Cologne and a knight, well known to the Emperor and the King of England, procured the order to stop the printing, and the King, Cardinal Wolsey, and Fisher, the Bishop of Rochester, were warned by Cochlaeus to keep a sharp lookout in all the sea ports of England "to prevent the importation of the pernicious merchandise."

About October, 1525, Tyndale arrived at Worms, which was then "full of the rage of Lutheranism," according to Cochlaeus, and Peter Schoeffer printed three thousand of an octavo, without prologue or glosses, and the quarto begun by Quentel at Cologne was also finished. Early in 1526 both editions were sent to England, in cases, in barrels, in bales of cloth, in sacks of flour, and in every other secret way that could be thought of. "It came as part of the Lutheran movement; it bore the Lutheran stamp in its version of ecclesiastical words; it came too in company with Luther's bitter invectives," writes Green. "The first Religious Tract Society," as Green calls them, were the "Christian Brethren," a society formed for the spread of Tyndale's New Testament and Luther's writings. Dr. Edward Lee, the King's almoner, and later bishop of York, on Decem-

ber 2, 1525, wrote Henry VIII from Bordeaux: "An Englishman, at the solicitation and instance of Luther, with whom he is, hath translated the New Testament into English, and within a few days intendeth to return with the same imprinted into England. I need not to advertise your Grace what infection and danger may ensue hereby if it be not withstood. This is the next (nearest) way to fulfil (fill full) your realm with Lutherans. For all Luther's opinions be grounded upon bare words of Scripture. . . . All our forefathers, governors of the Church of England, have with all diligence forbid and eschewed publication of English Bibles . . . the integrity of the Christian faith within your realm cannot long endure if these books may come in."

It seems that Simon Fyshe, a lawyer of Gray's Inn, London, and George Herman, a citizen of Antwerp, were among the first, if not the first, to spread the English New Testament in England. As early as January, 1526 (?), Thomas Garret, a curate of London, had Tyndale's New Testament, which he sold at Oxford "to such as he knew to be lovers of the Gospel." Cardinal Wolsey tracked him, arrested him and his friend Dalaber, and flung the Bibles into the fire. On Shrove Sunday, February 11, 1526, clothed in purple, sitting on a great platform outside St. Paul's, London, surrounded by thirty-six bishops, abbots, and friars, Cardinal Wolsey had Bishop Fisher of Rochester in his noted sermon from a new pulpit denounce Luther and his doctrine. Great basketfuls of Lutheran books were burned before the large crucifix at the northern gate. Tyndale says that in this fire copies of his New Testament were also burned.

About April or May, 1526, John Pykas of Colchester "bought a New Testament in English, and paid for it four shillings, which New Testament he kept and read it through many times," as he testified on trial before Tunstall, March 7, 1528, in the chapel of that very palace where Tyndale had in vain asked the bishop's patronage. In the summer, Stan-dish, bishop of St. Asaph, got hold of a copy and brought

it to Cardinal Wolsey; Tunstall urged a prohibition of the book, and in August or September it was unanimously resolved that the English New Testament should be publicly burned wherever discovered. Some time after September 3, Tunstall preached at Paul's Cross denouncing the New Testament and condemned it to be burned; on October 24 he issued an injunction in which he speaks of it as the work of "many children of iniquity, maintainers of Luther's sect, blinded through extreme wickedness, wandering from the way of truth and the Catholic faith," and he warned all to deliver up their English Testaments. A similar mandate was issued by Warham, archbishop of Canterbury, on November 3. Tunstall confessed that in his diocese the New Testaments were "thick spread." It was a safe business venture to reprint Tyndale's translation, and before the end of 1526, Christopher of Endhoven, an enterprising printer, pirated two thousand copies at Antwerp. Warham wanted to put an end to the heretical book by buying it up, and he spent nearly seventy pounds (about \$5000 to-day) before he gave up the "gracious and blessed deed, for which God should reward him hereafter," as Bishop Nix of Norwich prayed; he also contributed ten marks (about \$500 in our money) to buy and burn Bibles. Sure of buyers, among friends and enemies, the Dutch printers again pirated an edition of Tyndale, and London was once more supplied. In 1528 John Ruremond, a Dutchman, got into trouble by causing 1500 copies of Tyndale's New Testament to be printed at Antwerp and bringing 500 of them into England. In 1527 Nix wrote to the archbishop that more must be done. It was reported by many that even the king himself "wolde that they shulde have the arroneous boks;" and "merchants, and such that had ther abyding not ferre from the see," were greatly infected; and that from the college at Cambridge which sent the most priests into his diocese not one had come into Norfolk lately "but saverith of the frying pan, tho' he speke never so holey." Coming from the

Treaty of Cambray, concluded August 5, 1529, which embraced "the forbidding to print or sell any Lutheran books," Bishop Tunstall stopped over at Antwerp to seize Tyndale's New Testament. Augustine Packington, a merchant of London, who secretly favored Tyndale, offered to buy all unsold copies. "Gentle Master Packington," said the bishop, "deemyng that he hadde God by the toe, whanne in truthe he hadde, as after he thought, the devyl by the fiste," "do your diligence and get them for me; and with all my heart I will pay for them whatsoever they cost you, for the books are erroneous and nought, and I intend surely to destroy them all, and to burn them at Paul's Cross." And so forward went the bargain: the bishop had the books; Packington had the thanks; Tyndale had the money—to print more Bibles.

In 1531 William Tyndale's brother John and another person named Patmore were brought before Sir Thomas More, charged with receiving and distributing copies of the English New Testament, and were heavily fined and compelled to make a humiliating appearance at the Standard in Cheapside. On December 4, 1531, Richard Bayfield was burned at Smithfield for importing Tyndale's New Testament, five of Luther's works, five of Melanchthon's, four of Brenz's, three of Bugenhagen's, and others. Through Hacker over one hundred Bible readers were betrayed; of course they received due punishment. Of Tyndale's three thousand *quarto* New Testaments, only a single imperfect copy remains; and of the three thousand *octavo*, one, incomplete, in St. Paul's Cathedral, and the other, without the title-page, in the Baptist College at Bristol. All the rest were destroyed by the Papists. Thousands were burned with solemn ceremony at the old cross of St. Paul's, as "a burnt-offering most pleasing to almighty God," as Cardinal Campeggio wrote to Wolsey. It has been estimated that about 30,000 Bibles were imported into England from 1526 to 1536.

Tyndale came to Worms about October, 1525, and likely studied Hebrew among the Jews there whose ancient synagogue was built, according to tradition, shortly after the destruction of the Temple by Nebucadnezzar. At Worms Tyndale met Hermann von dem Busche, later professor of Poetry and Oratory at Marburg, who was then living at Speyer, only twenty miles from Worms. According to Spalatin's diary under date August, 1526, Buschius says Tyndale "was so learned in seven languages—Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, French—that in whichever he spoke you would think it was his native tongue."

Before the close of 1526 Tyndale printed at Worms his famous *Prologue to the Epistle to the Romans*, closing with a short summary of Paul's Epistle and Luther's commentary upon it. Writing in February, 1527, Dr. Ridley condemns it as "full of the most poisoned and abominable heresies that can be thought of," and Sir Thomas More attacks it for "bringing its readers into a false understanding of St. Paul." Demans says of it, "Nothing could show more strikingly than this work the great ascendancy which the German Reformer had now obtained over the mind of Tyndale. The *Introduction to the Romans* is in truth hardly an original work, but is much more correctly described as a translation or paraphrase of Luther's Preface to the same Epistle."

In 1527 Philip of Hessen founded the first Protestant university at Marburg, on the banks of the Lahn. One of the professors was Hermann von dem Busche, a pupil of Reuchlin, the first German Hebraist. Busch is said to be the first nobleman to forget his rank so far as to become a teacher in the schools. As we have already seen, he had become acquainted with Tyndale at Worms, and he had kept up a correspondence with the Englishman. It has been supposed Tyndale went to this quiet inland city to escape the persecution of his enemies.

On May 8, 1528, Hans Luft printed, at "Malborow," Tyndale's *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, or the Un-

just Steward, a treatise on the doctrine of Justification by Faith. "The choice of subject may fairly enough be considered an indication of the paramount influence which Luther now exercised over the mind of Tyndale; and, indeed, there are several striking similarities of sentiment and expression which were most certainly suggested by the writings of the great German Reformer," says Demans. The Archbishop of Canterbury condemned *The Wicked Mammon* as "containing many detestable errors and damnable opinions;" it was also condemned by a body of prelates and doctors summoned by Henry VIII; preachers were instructed to hold it up to public detestation; a catalogue of nine-and-twenty distinct heretical propositions was drawn from the dangerous publication; Sir Thomas More uniformly calls it "The Wicked Book of Mammon," "a very treasury and well-spring of wickedness," "a book by which many have been beguiled, and brought into many wicked heresies."

At the time *The Wicked Mammon* was printed there appeared also at "Malborow" *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, Tyndale's largest and most elaborate work; next to his translation of Holy Scripture, it was the book by which he was best known in his time, that which exerted the greatest influence upon those who were friendly to the Reformation. It is a defense of the Reformers from the charge that "they caused insurrection, and taught the people to disobey their heads and governors, and to rise against their princes, and to make all common, and to make havoc of other men's goods." In this work Tyndale charges the Papists with having corrupted the sacraments. Baptism and "the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ" had promises annexed to them, and were, therefore, true sacraments; "Scripture hath but one sense, which is the literal sense . . . whereunto if thou cleave thou canst never err or go out of the way. And if thou leave the literal sense, thou canst not but go out of the way." No wonder Sir Thomas More pours out the vials of his wrath upon this book; "He

hath not only *sowked* out the most poison that he could find through all Luther's books, or take of him by mouth and all that hath *spette* out in this book, but hath also in many things far passed his master."

This book strengthened the Lutherans in England: Bilney and Bainham, for instance, repented of their recantation and bore the cruel death by fire with remarkable courage. It also gave to the Reformers a definite aim and purpose. It fell into the hands of Anne Boleyn and through her Henry VIII read it and was deeply impressed by it. "This book is for me and all kings to read," he said, and he took into his own hands the reins of power hitherto held by Cardinal Wolsey. Wolsey founded Cardinal College, now Christ Church, at Oxford for the purpose of opposing Lutheranism, and among his last words were for the king "to depress this new sect of Lutherans."

At Marburg Tyndale was joined by John Fryth, his "own son according to the faith," who had been imprisoned, degraded, and exiled for the crime of reading the English Bible and Lutheran works. It is likely that Tyndale was one of the fifty present at the great debate on the Lord's Supper between Luther and Zwingli in 1529.

Tyndale's translation of the five books of Moses was "Emprented at Malborow in the lande of Hesse by me Hans Luft the yere of our Lorde M.CCCCC.XXX. the XVII dayes of Januarij."<sup>1)</sup> It is clear from a comparison of the two that Tyndale in his Pentateuch followed Lotter's edition of Luther's translation, though not with the "slavish deference of a copyist, as he is sometimes said to have done." In the glosses "the spirit and even the style of Luther is distinctly visible," says Westcott. "Perhaps it would have been better if Tyndale had in this matter more closely followed his German predecessor; for the greatest of Tyndale's admirers must admit that his keen sarcasms are by no means

1) Dr. Julius Caesar, librarian of the University of Marburg, says Hans Luft never had a printery in that city, but we think him in error.

so suitable an accompaniment to the sacred text as Luther's topographical and expository notes," says Demans. Some called him "nothing more than an English echo of the great German heresiarch." "Those best acquainted with the theology of the English Reformation will be the first to admit that we shall look in vain in Cranmer, Latimer, or Ridley for any such clearness of apprehension and precision as here displayed by Tyndale." The bitterest of all Tyndale's writings is his *Practice of Prelates*, a sort of historical summary of the *practices* by which Pope and clergy gradually grew up from poverty and humility into that universal supremacy enjoyed by them in Tyndale's time.

The Papists felt it was high time to bestir themselves. Accordingly, Bishop Tunstall, on March 7, 1528, licensed More, his "Demosthenes," to read the books of Lutheran heresy and reply to them. Sir Thomas More attacked "the pestilent sect of Luther and Tyndale" in his *Dialogue*, and in 1531 Tyndale printed in Amsterdam his "Answer" in defense of the Reformation. More felt constrained to reply to Tyndale; he published part of his *Confutation* in May, 1532, and the work of opposing Tyndale kept him busy till the day of his death: in all he wrote about one thousand folio pages against the Reformer. The *Confutation* is extremely tedious and virulent. "Not to speak of the ribald abuse poured forth in season and out of season upon Luther, the language applied to Tyndale is altogether unpardonable," says Demans.

A few years before Tyndale had left England poor and unknown; now his fame resounded through all England. Sir Thomas More, Lord Chancellor of England, chief legal adviser of Henry VIII at a most momentous crisis in English history, felt compelled to write against Tyndale. What stronger proof of Tyndale's power could be asked? According to Anthony Wood, More was "one of the greatest prodigies of wit and learning that England ever before his time had produced," and Tyndale entered the arena against him

and in several important points remained master of the field. More had vowed, "I shall leave Tyndale never a dark corner to creep into, able to hide his head in." Now he had to confess, "Men thought his *Confutation* overlong, and therefore tedious to read," a sad confession that the great wit of the age and Chancellor of the realm had gotten the worst of the controversy.

*The Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount* was printed in 1532. It is the ablest of all Tyndale's expository works. George Joy says that in reality "Luther made it, Tyndale only but translating and powdering it here and there with his own fantasies." Certainly Tyndale closely followed Luther's commentary. The coincidences between Tyndale's *Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount* and that of Luther, though fewer, are even more worthy of notice" than usual, says Westcott. This great scholar also speaks of the "profound influence which Luther exerted upon his (Tyndale's) writings generally. The extent to which Tyndale silently incorporated free or even verbal translations of passages from Luther's works in his own has escaped the notice of his editors. . . . Tyndale's *Prologue* to his quarto Testament, his first known writing, almost at the beginning introduces a large fragment from Luther's Preface to the New Testament. There is indeed a ring in the opening words which might have led any one familiar with Luther's style to suspect their real source."

When the plague visited Germany in 1530 and carried off Francis Lambert of the Marburg University, a devoted friend of Tyndale, the Englishman left Marburg, grieving over the growing immorality of the city, and went to Antwerp.

WILLIAM DALLMANN.

(To be concluded.)

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## THE PASTOR IN HIS WORK.

### II. The Pastor and the Pulpit.

In order to preach the saving Word in its truth and purity a careful and thorough distinction between Law and Gospel is indispensably necessary. The distinction between these two doctrines is the key to the Bible. Any man who does not know that the Bible contains these two distinct doctrines will not and cannot understand its teachings; the Bible will appear to him a book full of contradictions. When the Lord says, "This do—love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself,—and thou shalt live," Luke 10, 28, and the apostle writes, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works," Eph. 2, 8, these two words cannot but seem contradictory to him who does not know that they belong to two distinct systems of teaching. It is not possible that a preacher who has himself not learned to distinguish doctrines could present the plan of salvation in its proper order. A sharp distinction between Law and Gospel alone will teach the pastor where each doctrine belongs and in what connection it must be preached.

On the importance of this distinction the *Formula of Concord* (Art. V, No. 1) says: "Inasmuch as the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is a peculiarly glorious light, which contributes to a right dividing (2 Tim. 2, 15) of the Word of God, and to a proper explanation and understanding of the writings of the holy prophets and apostles, it must be retained with the greatest diligence, lest these two divisions of doctrines be commingled, or the Gospel be transformed into a law; by which course the merits of Christ would be obscured, and afflicted consciences would be deprived of that comfort which they otherwise have in the Gospel, if it is preached purely and sincerely, and by which they can sustain themselves in their severest trials, against the terrors of the Law."

For the right distinction and application of both Law and Gospel it must be remembered that the Law is the hammer to shatter the rocky hearts of the impenitent, a fire to consume the impurities remaining in the hearts of the converted, Jer. 23, 29. The Gospel is the good Samaritan pouring oil into the wounds of the alarmed conscience and binding up the broken hearts with the assurance of mercy, Luke 10, 34. The Gospel is the glad tidings of great joy which comes from heaven and proclaims the gracious forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake. To hurl the thunders of Sinai at the alarmed and penitent is using the hammer on the broken hearts, a cruelty rebuked in Ezek. 34, 4. To comfort those who "go on in sin" with grace and forgiveness in heaven is pouring oil over the unbroken rock, a waste of the precious forbidden in Matt. 7, 6. To mix up Law and Gospel, to preach that faith and works must go together for the salvation of man, that, if man does what he can, God will not fail to do His part, to speak of the Gospel of love to our neighbor and to picture Christ as a savior whose favor we must win by doing good is using hammer and oil indiscriminately, which will create a muddle and such a splashing that neither preacher nor hearer can tell which is which. In all theology and in all preaching the right distinction between Law and Gospel is the most necessary thing, because without it the way of salvation cannot be taught right.

This distinction between Law and Gospel must not only be presented theoretically—a sermon bearing directly on this subject is frequently in place—in all his preaching the pastor is to carry it out practically. A point where the two are frequently mingled without the preacher knowing or intending it is in exhortations unto good works. To make the Law the primary motive for good works, to teach people that they must do a certain thing because it is a service of God commanded in His Law, and to make the mercy of God the primary motive for doing good, teaching

people to walk in good works because God has shown them such great mercy in Jesus Christ are two very different ways of exhorting unto good works. The one is legalistic, the other evangelical. The one genders a servile spirit of bondage, the other a free spirit of adoption. When one man goes to church on Sunday morning thinking he must because it is commanded in God's Law, and the other goes to church on Sunday because he wants to, remembering the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, those two men are actuated by two very different spirits. The one has the Jewish spirit of legalism, the other the free spirit of Christ. The one is a son of Hagar, the bondmaid, the other a son of Sarah, the mistress of the house. The pastor's preaching should therefore not make the hearers Hagarites, it should be of such a character as to make them sons and daughters of the freewoman. By preaching the love of God, free salvation in Jesus Christ, the preacher should fill his hearers with zeal and ardor to run, and then he should lay down the Ten Commandments as the way *in which* to run, so that the word be fulfilled in them: "I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart," Ps. 119, 32.

In his sermon on the Epistle for the First Sunday after Epiphany, Luther speaks of the right way to exhort unto good works in this wise: "*I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God.* Paul does not say: I command you. He is preaching to those who are already Christians, pious through faith after the new man. And these should not be compelled by commandments, but admonished, so that they may do willingly what is to be done with the sinful old nature. For whosoever does not do it willingly, moved by friendly admonition, is not a Christian; and whosoever extorts it from the unwilling by commandments is no more a Christian preacher or ruler, but a worldly taskmaster. The legalist drives with threats and punishments, the preacher of grace incites and persuades by the divine goodness and

mercy which has been manifested unto us; for he does not want unwilling works or a demure service, he wants cheerful services rendered to God joyously."

Next to St. Paul no other man was such a master in distinguishing Law and Gospel as was Martin Luther, and none other saw the necessity of such a distinction more clearly than he did. He had learned it in a hard school of bitter experience, and it is self-experience indeed which alone can make a man truly skilled in this divine art. To give a definition in theory is easy enough. The Law commands, the Gospel persuades; the Law drives, the Gospel draws; but to carry out the demarcation line practically in all the work of the ministry is an art which the Holy Ghost must teach, and every truly God-fearing man who has grown gray in the work of the ministry is ready to confess just with regard to the right application of Law and Gospel: In Thy light alone, O Lord, can we see the light (Ps. 36, 9); for it is the right application of Law and Gospel which teaches when to rebuke, when to praise, when to warn, when to comfort.

The right distinction between Law and Gospel will go far towards presenting the various doctrines of the Scriptures in their proper order. It is true that all teachings of the Scriptures are divine truth, the least as well as the greatest, but not all are of the same importance. Hence it is a duty of the pastor in the course of time to preach all the teachings of the Scriptures, as Paul testified of himself in saying to the elders of the church at Ephesus: "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God," Acts 20, 26, 27. But the more important truths must be preached the more frequently. The first elements of the Christian doctrine, as, the articles of redemption, of justification, of the means of grace, must be made familiar to the hearers, and the preacher should exercise care to put each doctrine in the proper place where it

belongs. To preach the election of grace in such a way as though it preceded redemption in Christ is corrupting the Scriptures; for according to the Scriptures election grows out of redemption, and not contrariwise. We once heard a preacher speak of sanctification, urging all his hearers to follow holiness, and then going on to speak of conversion, without showing the relation between the two, thus making the impression that a man could be sanctified before being converted.

When we say that the doctrines should be preached in their proper order, we do, of course, not mean that a pastor should preach the articles of doctrine in the order in which he finds them in a compend of theology, but he should present the teachings of the Scriptures in such a way that the simplest among his hearers can gather a clear knowledge of the way of salvation from his preaching. To attain this object the preacher must exercise care to employ a clear and lucid arrangement and style in each sermon. It is, of course, true that the Holy Ghost can use also disconnected truths to kindle saving faith, but the confused sermon is not adapted either to hold the attention of the hearer or to impart a clear knowledge of the plan of salvation. For this purpose, too, a sermon must be carefully prepared, that it may form a logical, or, at least, a well-connected discourse in all its parts.

Before closing this subject a few things should be mentioned which a pastor should be diligent to avoid in preparing his sermons. He should avoid making a hobby of any subject, *i. e.*, he should not give undue prominence to any one particular teaching. Making a hobby of some particular doctrine belongs to sectarianism. Another evil to be avoided is the habit of running along in certain ruts. If a pastor has a certain circle of doctrines and subjects on which he preaches year after year, his sermons, even when composed new, are almost certain to lose in freshness, and he is apt to become tedious to his hearers. The Lutheran

custom of preaching on the Gospels and Epistles offers great advantages and should by all means be kept up and not be displaced by the modern method of using half a clause for a text. Yet a pastor preaching continually on the prescribed texts may fall into the habit of preaching *substantially* the same sermons year after year. After serving the same pastorate for a number of years the preacher will find it an advantage frequently to choose other than the regular Sunday texts. It is a change for both preacher and hearers, and awakens new interest and new relish.

Another thing for a pastor to avoid in the pulpit is the appearance of undue contentiousness. A pastor who teaches the true doctrine is in duty bound to reject and to refute the opposite false doctrine, and this he dare not omit where circumstances require it. St. Paul emphatically enjoins this duty when he writes: "A bishop must be . . . holding fast the faithful Word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision; whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake," Tit. 1, 9—11. The pastor who can see the wolf breaking into his own fold and who will not open his mouth to warn against him is a hireling and not a true shepherd. "If the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand," Ezek. 33, 6. The lack of positive firmness in the proclamation of the truth is an ailing of our unionistic times. It must be called a running sore of the modern church that the refutation of falsehood has so largely disappeared from the pulpit and the preaching of heresy is encouraged in wide circles. The very love of the souls entrusted to his care must constrain a faithful pastor to warn against errors

which threaten to undermine the faith of his hearers and to poison their souls.

But every pastor will do well to remember that he is made watchman only in a certain pastorate, and that he is not universal bishop of the universal Church, like the pope who, claiming to be the head of the universal Church of all ages, must count it his bounden duty annually on Maundy Thursday to anathematize by name every heretic that has arisen in Christendom since the days of Caiaphas. For a preacher to resurrect and to refute old and exploded heresies of which the hearers perhaps never heard is not only squandering time, it also gives him the appearance of being over-contentious. To speak of defunct heresies in the pulpit is only justifiable when it is done to illustrate an important point of doctrine. Neither should the preacher aim to refute every error current in newspapers and magazines, he is rather commanded to "avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain," Tit. 3, 9. If the preacher makes the impression of being needlessly contentious, this tends to render the hearts less receptive for the truth which he preaches. The American pulpit has no need of refuting Mohammedanism.

When a pastor does expose the errors of neighboring denominations to whose influence the members of his parish are exposed, he should avoid all hard and harsh terms which would be counted an affront and would hurt the feelings rather than convince the hearts. In warning against popular errors or the wrong teachings of surrounding sects the preacher should studiously avoid yielding to a spirit of rancor and hate, and should always show that it is done from love of the truth, or from watchfulness for his own flock, or both, and he should always prove what he says with convincing arguments. If the preacher speaks in such a way that people have reason to say, he rails at others without proving what he says, he thwarts his own object and suc-

ceeds only in hampering his own usefulness. As the use of physical force cannot build the kingdom of God, even so railing and "running down others," as the common phrase has it, cannot advance the cause of the truth. Here applies that word of the Lord: "The truth shall make you free," John 8, 32. Railing and harsh language cannot free the mind from error. The truth alone can drive error out of the hearts, and the truth alone can fortify the hearts against error.

Even so in rebuking sins, especially sins practiced by his own people and in his own parish, the preacher should avoid harsh and scolding language. Railing language is very apt to embitter, but it will not better. When the preacher rebukes sinful practices, such as dancing, frequenting saloons, holding carousals, etc., and he uses language which impresses the offenders as proceeding from a spirit of bitterness, they are even thereby provoked to kick against the pricks, and while the pastor may be flattering himself that he has done all in his power against the evil, he is too blind to see that his own mistaken zeal has contributed much towards making matters worse. A good and kind word spoken from a loving heart will go farther than ten thunderbolts hurled from the pulpit. When a warning of the strongest character against sin is found necessary, then let language be used to picture the sin in its true colors, its dread sinfulness, and its awful consequences, but even then harsh and offensive terms should be avoided. "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity," 1 Tim. 5, 1. 2. Though the apostle wrote these words with reference to private admonition, they apply also to pulpit language. Denouncing real or imaginary sins in unmeasured and vulgar terms should be left to our so-called evangelists.

Finally, the preacher should avoid doing private pastoral work in so public a place as the pulpit. The rebuking and admonishing of individual persons must not be done

from the pulpit. The sermon is a public address to the whole congregation, or the entire assembly, and it must not be diverted to individual persons. In rare and exceptional cases a preacher may be justified in bringing personal matters to the pulpit, but doing it under ordinary circumstances is both very wrong and very unwise, because it is an affront to the persons concerned, and is sure to cause disturbance in the congregation.

The most essentially important thing in a pastor's work is preaching. Therefore he is called a preacher, because he is called to preach. To this function of his office the pastor is to devote the best of his time and energy. "Preach the Word," says the apostle, 2 Tim. 4, 2; "be instant in season, out of season." The Lord's marching order to His apostles was: "Go ye and preach," and this is enjoined on all the followers of the apostles. The pastor who is negligent in preaching is negligent in the most essential part of his office. The main thing in the office of a priest is sacrificing, and the main thing in the office of a preacher is preaching. Happy the preacher who loves to preach, who takes delight in delivering the message entrusted to him.

It is, however, not the much preaching, but rather *the right kind* of preaching which is wanted. Much harm is done in the world by the wrong kind of preaching, and the more there is of it the worse it is. Every minister who would build the kingdom of Christ must take heed what he preaches and how he preaches. On this the *Apology* says: "Because by the grace of God there is Christian and wholesome teaching in our churches for comfort in all trials, therefore the people gladly frequent good preaching. For there is nothing which tends so much to attach the people to the church as the good sermon. But our adversaries preach the people out of the churches, because they do not teach the necessary articles of Christian doctrine, but relate legends of saints and other fables." (Art. of the Mass, No. 51.)

In these words our Confessions express a truth which is amply demonstrated by experience. Good sermons will attract the people, poor preaching will soon cause them to think it not worth while to go to church. A good and wholesome dish is inviting, an empty vessel has little attraction. People do not care to go where they find only the scattering of chaff, or the threshing of straw. When a man goes to church and hears a good sermon it is an incentive to go again.

Now a good sermon wants to be studied. Those men are rare indeed who can go to the pulpit and deliver a good sermon without previous preparation. Only when the preacher enters the pulpit well prepared can the audience expect a good sermon, and it may be laid down as a rule: the more thorough the preparation the better the sermon. This rule is, of course, denied by those who claim inspiration for their preachers, Tunkers, Mennonites, and some others. These declare that preachers must not study their sermons, but are to say what is given them by the Spirit while they are speaking. In support of this extravagant opinion they appeal to the Lord's words: "Beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you," Matt. 10, 17—20. In these words the Lord promised His disciples, at a certain hour they should be enabled to speak by the Spirit of God without previous preparation, but He gave this promise to martyrs and not to preachers, and to refer this promise to the "hour" of preaching is a woeful corruption of the Lord's words. Hearing the insipid talk of such a would-be inspired preacher once ought to be sufficient to convince any man of sober judgment that it is not the Spirit of God speak-

ing by him. There is no promise that preachers shall be inspired, although it is not denied that in cases of extreme necessity, when there was absolutely no time or opportunity for preparation, a God-fearing preacher may arise to preach with the sure confidence that the God who has sent him to preach and has placed him in such a situation will also be his helper. The preacher who is careless and neglectful in preparing his sermons acts in direct violation of the Word of God; for to Timothy Paul writes: "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all," 1 Tim. 4, 13. 15. And Mal. 2, 7 it is said: "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." If the people are to learn the Law at the preacher's mouth, he must study the Law and must compare all the words which he speaks to the people with the Law of the Lord, and must make sure that he is a true messenger of God. But of this he cannot be sure except he speak after careful preparation. The ambassador of Christ is in duty bound to make full use of his time, that he may deliver the Master's message right and to the best of his ability. Every sermon should be his best effort.

In preparing a sermon a pastor should nevertheless not depend on his own learning, ingenuity, and skill. Instant prayer should precede the composing of each and every sermon. The pastor's study should be a closet of prayer, his writing desk an altar from which sighs arise to the Author of all true spiritual wisdom. Neither linguistic, nor philosophic, nor scientific education and knowledge, nor the most brilliant mental gifts will properly fit a man for the composing of a *good* sermon. These may all be helps, but they must be counted only handmaids and nothing more. While making full use of the knowledge which he has acquired and the gifts of mind which he has received the pastor should never forget that he is called to proclaim "*the*

mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God," Eph. 3, 9. The true and living knowledge of this mystery cannot be obtained by human research and sagacity, it must be revealed to the heart by Him in whom it is hid. Of this mystery the Lord said to Peter, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven," Matt. 16, 17. Let the preacher be ever so highly educated and ever so gifted, if he depends on "flesh and blood," his own wisdom and ability, the true inwardness of this mystery will remain hid to him. God reserves to Himself this glory that He is "the only wise God," 1 Tim. 1, 17, who "layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous," Prov. 2, 7, and He will not show His secrets to those who are wise in their own conceits, for which the Son returns thanks to the Father saying: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight," Matt. 11, 25, 26. Humility, despairing of one's own ability, is an essentially necessary prerequisite for the right and truly fruitful study of the Scriptures. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple," Ps. 19, 7. A pastor must be humble enough to acknowledge with St. Paul: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God," 2 Cor. 4, 5. When going to work to prepare a sermon let it be done with instant prayer for the light, the guidance, and the governing of the Holy Ghost.

This necessity of prayer is by no means refuted by the fact that a pastor who is himself an unconverted man and who performs his labors without prayer, or whose prayer is but sounding brass may also compose and deliver a sermon which is good in itself. He may possess a formal, theoretical knowledge of the Scriptural doctrine, and he may present it in orthodox words and in such a form and manner that his sermons must be pronounced good both as

to contents and form, but he, nevertheless, cannot preach as every ambassador of Christ ought to do. If conceit and ambition possess his heart, it will show in his conduct and his language, style and subjects will be chosen and framed to find honor with men. If he is a hireling, he will aim to avoid what would be unpleasant to the hearers and might tend to diminish his revenues. If he is ruled by the love of ease, he will not devote the time and labor to his sermons which he might and should devote to them. Even when aiming to preach only what is in the Bible the unconverted preacher who does not seek the face of the Lord will speak of the mysteries of God as would a blind man of colors. He cannot speak as a man who has himself "tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come," Hebr. 6, 5. He is a man who speaks in a cause in which his own heart is not concerned, and his preaching must be lacking "in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power," 1 Cor. 2, 4. The scribes and Pharisees also studied the Law of Moses and expounded it to the people, but when Christ explained the Law, "the people were astonished at His doctrine. For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes," Matt. 7, 29. That preacher alone whose heart believes what he preaches to others, whose soul has stood under the lowering clouds of Sinai and has tasted the sweetness of Christ, he alone can preach as a man knowing whereof he speaks, and though he be an Amos and not an Isaiah, the Spirit of God will make his preaching a polished shaft.

Fervent prayer before composing and before delivering a sermon is like a strong anchor for the God-fearing pastor who feels his weakness and realizes his own insufficiency. The right kind of preaching is God's gift. He must give a spiritual eye to discern the things of the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 2, 14. He must open the understanding to behold wondrous things out of His Law, Ps. 119, 18. Of the times of the New Covenant He said by the prophet: "The tongue

of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly,"' Is. 32, 4. In the hour of distress, when all wisdom and skill seems to have departed from him, let the pastor do what the Scriptures bid him: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him," James 1, 5. And when a sermon has been prepared with much study and prayer and seems so poor that the manuscript would go into the fire but for lack of time to make another effort, the pastor should commit it to God and should go to the pulpit cheerfully. Not infrequently does God bestow a special blessing on sermons that we are altogether dissatisfied with. And though our preaching do not find the applause of the public or the praise of the learned, what of it? Among the polished Corinthians some said even of St. Paul, "His letters are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible," 2 Cor. 10, 10. Yet this same Paul accomplished more for the planting of the Church than any of the other apostles. God judges differently from men, and He never despises the petitions of an humble pastor who is instant in prayer.

The primary reason why each and every sermon must be prepared carefully and prayerfully is, because it dare contain nothing which is not in full harmony with the Word of God. Churches are built and pulpits are erected for the proclamation of God's revealed Truth unto the salvation of souls. Sectarian churches are built and sectarian preachers are called for the promulgation of sectarian doctrines, a mixture of truth and error, but Lutheran pulpits are built and Lutheran ministers are called for the preaching of "the everlasting Gospel," Rev. 14, 6. Every Lutheran pastor who has subscribed the Book of Concord in an unqualified manner has pledged himself to the principle: "'The Word of God makes articles of faith, and no one else, not even an angel.'" *(Smalcald Art., Part II, No. 15.)* The sermon, all of it, must be taken from the Word of God. Self-evi-

dently it may be embellished with illustrations taken from nature, from history, from current events, from the doings of men, both pious and wicked, etc., but it must not contain anything which is against the Word of God, or by which men are led into error. Nor should any dubious expressions be used which are liable to be misunderstood or misconstrued. The pastor must pattern after Paul who declared in his defense before King Agrippa, "Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come," Acts 26, 22. Paul did not preach politics and science; he did not aim to tickle the ears of his hearers with pleasing discourses; he studied the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and these he preached as having been fulfilled in Christ. The pastor must make sure that the doctrines which he preaches are none other than the doctrines taught in the Scriptures.

In his *Reply to Henry of Brunswick*, entitled: *Wider Hans Wurst* (§ 66), Dr. Luther says: "But the doctrine must not be sin, nor reprehensible. It does not belong into the Lord's Prayer where we say, 'Forgive us our trespasses,' because it is not our work, but God's own Word, who cannot sin or do wrong. For a preacher must not pray the Lord's Prayer and seek the forgiveness of sins after preaching (if he is a true preacher), but must be bold to say with Jeremiah, Jer. 17, 16: 'Thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was right before thee.' Yea, he must be ready freely to say with St. Paul and all the apostles and prophets: '*Haec dixit Dominus*,' God Himself hath said it. And again: I was an apostle and prophet of Jesus Christ in this sermon. Here it is not necessary, yea, rather, not good to ask forgiveness of sin, as though he had taught wrong. It is God's word, not mine, and this God neither shall nor can forgive me, but He must confirm, praise, crown it, and say: Thou hast taught right; for I have spoken by thee, and the Word is mine. The man who

cannot boast of his sermon in this way should let preaching alone; for he will surely lie and blaspheme God.'' (Walch's ed., vol. XVII, 1685.)

Writing out each sermon in full is by all means the safest way to make sure of its coming up to this mark. Then it can be examined in all its parts and sentences. But if, for lack of time or other reasons, the sermon is not written *in extenso*, the whole contents must be so completely stored in the mind that the pastor knows exactly what he will say or has said. When nothing more is done than to write a meager skeleton or to throw a few notes on paper, when the mind has not mastered each particular point, the preacher cannot be positively sure of always finding and using lucid and proper words when in the pulpit. It is therefore always advisable, particularly for younger pastors, to write the sermon sentence for sentence. In this way the preacher also safeguards himself in case of criticism or stricture. When he exercises the utmost care it may, nevertheless, happen that he is misunderstood, or that his teaching is called in question by one or more of his hearers. In such cases it is well if the pastor can produce his manuscript and can show black on white what he did preach. If he cannot do this, he may not be able to remove doubt from the mind of a questioner, and when a hearer doubts the orthodoxy of his pastor, or even is suspicious as to his uprightness, this will become a hindrance to the hearer, preventing him from reaping the benefit of his preaching which he ought and otherwise might.

The great importance of every sermon containing nothing but the truth of God is also specially evident from the words of the Lord: "The truth shall make you free," John 8, 32. The wood, hay, stubble of human thoughts and human opinions will be burned up in the day of trial. Divine truth alone can fortify the soul against all trials. Every pastor having a heart for his people must be intent on building their souls on a foundation which cannot give way when the last test approaches. But the truth alone can make

free, free from error, free from terror. Ever should we pastors in preparing sermons bear in mind the truth which our Confessions express in the words: "If there is to be a Christian church and a Christian faith, they must preach and teach a doctrine which places the soul, not upon error or sand, but on a foundation on which it may firmly rely and trust." (*Apology. De Justificatione*, No. 119.)

VIRGINIUS.

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## MISCELLANY.

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**Facts about Divorce.** *The Christian Statesman*, organ of the National Reform Association, has gathered some facts which go to show that divorces are proportionally more numerous in the United States than in any other country furnishing statistics, and that there have been years when more divorces were granted in the United States than in all other civilized countries together. From 1870 to 1890 the ratio of divorce to marriage nearly doubled. It was 3.5 per cent. in 1870, it had become 6.2 in 1890. Statistics of our great cities will be found of special interest. Those in New York State stand best, the metropolis slightly better than Buffalo. Together these show 40 marriages to one divorce. Then follows Baltimore with 28 marriages to a divorce and Philadelphia with 20. Then the ratio of divorce gradually rises. Washington and Pittsburg with 18.9 and 18.5 rank above Boston and New Orleans, with 14.1 and 13.9, in spite of the exceptional strength in both of the Roman Church. Then by successive steps of social decline we pass from Denver to Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Providence, Indianapolis, San Francisco, and close the list with Kansas City, where there was a divorce for every four marriages in 1901—ten times as many as in New York City. The discrepancies between these great cities in this matter can hardly be attributed to race, to climate, or to confession of faith. Some of the cities, New York and Buffalo, for instance, no doubt owe their

good record to wholesome law and its careful administration. Conspicuous laxity in both regards will account for the figures in San Francisco and Kansas City, but hardly explains why Providence should have proportionally nearly three times the divorces of Boston, or seven times those of New York. To improve these conditions the Inter-Church Union was organized a few months ago in New York City. Its ultra-scriptural ideal is: Prohibition of divorce in the Protestant Church.

F. B.

**Religious Bodies of America.** Dr. Laidlaw, a statistician of much experience, has undertaken to estimate the strength of the 150 or more religious bodies in this country. The population of the United States, he thinks, is not far from 82,000,000; the Census Bureau would accord us 81,000,000. Of these, about 30,000,000 are church members, and of this number Dr. Laidlaw accords to the Roman Catholics 9,820,114, which, by the way, is more than 2,000,000 less than is claimed by the Catholic Directory. This number is that of the baptized. Nearly one-tenth of the whole Roman Catholic population is in New York City, showing that the gain has been very largely due to immigration. Meantime, since 1890, the communicants of various Protestant bodies have increased 35 per cent.; and if, as Dr. Laidlaw estimates, every two communicants represent five adherents, we should have under Christian influence 60,680,000 persons, or very nearly four-fifths of the population. Leaving immigration aside, there is every reason to believe that Roman Catholicism is not relatively holding its own, startlingly rapid as its growth has been in some quarters. He divides the Protestants into groups, according as they follow episcopal, synodal, or congregational polity. The Congregationalists, 7,535,580, are the most numerous. Episcopal government is recognized by 7,268,518, a Presbyterian polity preferred by 4,063,577. Dr. Laidlaw believes that Protestantism will continue to be the dominant religion in our land.

F. B.